

Skybird Notes



Free Radio Skybird
10th Anniversary Zine

LONG LIVE FREE RADIO SKYBIRD!



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Years later I learned that my father had played country music on his guitar live on that very same radio station in the late 1930s before he was stationed in India during World War II and my mother had sang on WFEA with her high school glee club around the same time, though they didn't actually meet until 1952.

When I was eleven, twelve, and thirteen, my friends would play "DJ" by rigging up homemade Radio Shack transmitters, or recording music and shows onto monolithic cassette or reel-to-reel tape recorders and blasting them through loudspeakers to the neighborhood. In the summers of 1974 & 1975 I spent months at the University of New Hampshire taking classes (well, smoking more weed than actually attending classes). Immediately I gravitated toward the radio station, WUNH, which I discovered was being run by a scruffy looking guy with a five day old beard who didn't talk much but would run in every few minutes to throw another record on the turntable. When I offered to help him out, much to my surprise he said "yes" --- I could play any music I wanted but had to patch in ABC news at 55 minutes into every hour. No problem! I felt like I had just been handed the keys to a candy store. So listeners to 91.3 that summer were treated to my already eclectic taste in music --- *From the Mars Hotel* by the Grateful Dead ... Mike Oldfield's *Tubular Bells* ... *Eat a Peach* by the Allman Brothers ... Bob Dylan's *Planet Waves* ... the phone rang several times a day ... people were calling to thank me for playing full LP sides. To this day I can't tolerate how my vocal patterns sound to my ears on the radio and I loathe trying to act like a "professional" announcer. What you hear is what you get! Hopefully that's just fine.

Around the turn of the millennium, I began to grow excited about radio again—a passion set aside from childhood. By 2001, I was regularly listening to shortwave stations and discovering online radio streams. One station that was music to my ears: Skybird Radio, run by Gary Bourgeois & a tech-savvy crew of volunteers who had diverse interests. The music on Skybird Radio was usually cool & strange & more than a little obscure. Every Friday night Gary broadcast live from his living room, and discussed updates in computer technology, satellite and internet radio, space exploration, astronomy, radio propagation, and technical aspects of radio and video engineering.

Most of the technical stuff went right over my head, however the music that Gary played, and his style of informal conversation appealed to me. *Friday Night Live* was no slick production—this was a real person who often paused for what seemed like minutes, fumbled for words, and often improvised through inevitable technical glitches. Listening to Gary was a joy to my ears.

I did not know Gary personally, however I listened to Skybird Radio until Gary passed away somewhat suddenly in 2005. Five years later, I decided to try a homegrown tribute to Gary called *Son of Friday Night Live* which I broadcast every Friday night from the studios of WNEC 91.7 in Henniker NH.

I included Gary's *Adventures of Flash Frisbone* in my broadcasts as well as snippets from Skybird Radio that had been preserved online in mp3 format. *Son of Friday Night Live* evolved into Free Radio Skybird which is transmitted on shortwave frequencies in Europe via Channel 292 on 6070 kHz and via Unique Radio in Australia. All shows are archived at radio4all.net.

That's the cliff notes version of our prehistory—Skybird Notes is a zine to mark the 10th anniversary of this humble radio project. Let's cue up some records & listen!

The Worlds Most Advanced Portable Shortwave Radio? The Sangean 909 reviewed by Gary Bourgois

Sitting on my desk right next to me is my brand new **SANGEAN 909**. I am totally amazed at the advances in this radio over every other portable I own, and it even does a lot of stuff that my \$1000 Kenwood doesn't!

Since my SONY ICF-2010 is non functional, I have no way to compare it as far as reception goes, but it seems to be a very hot little number. Gadgets and Gizmos abound and if you like to play radio, this is the one to get because it has the most bang for the buck right now. It is also a blast to use, and was a lot easier to program than I thought it would be. If you have ever programmed a VHF/UHF scanner, or a satellite receiver, you know what programming is all about. You have 306 memories, though 9 of them are wasted on the longwave band (Unless you like beacons). SW gives you a whopping 261 memory channels, which is more than enough to satisfy any SW program listener. You can also store 18 stations on both AM and FM. I would like a few more on AM, but 18 is double what I had on the 808, and gives me the major stations I listen to (all talk stations).

On AM and FM, you can store each individual stations call letters. AND the really cool thing is that while you are tuning manually if you hit a station that is in memory, it's name pops up on the LCD screen!

On SW you can program any frequency you want to. The name function on shortwave, however is only for page name. This is OK though. You could make page one the BBC for example, and program in 9 BBC frequencies. The 909 will then search until it finds the strongest of the 9 frequencies, a very handy feature. Thus I set my favorite DAYTIME and NIGHTTIME frequencies on separate pages, and when I hit BBC/DAY on the page memory selection, Badda Bing--Badda Boom, the strongest of the 9 channels comes in. No manual

The Evolution of DJ Frederick

As a child in the late 1960s I spent many hours exploring my father's "cavern" in the basement of our small house. His electronics repair shop smelled of dust and damp and solder. His work benches were strewn with the chassis of TVs & radios, and mysterious tubes of all sizes. At some point in my early childhood – I think it was around the age of eight, I simultaneously started collecting 7" vinyl records (the first record I ever bought was **Atlantis** by Donovan) and heard a Zenith shortwave radio which had been on my father's workbench for repairs. The booming audio and unfamiliar music and languages intrigued me, as did the static and strange noises between the stations. The airwaves were alive and even though people were broadcasting from across the world, it sounded like they were next door. There seemed to be hundreds of shortwave stations all up and down the radio dial.

This encounter with shortwave was unfortunately quickly forgotten as I focused on "dx'ing" (a term for distance listening) medium wave band (AM) radio stations in the US. I spent hours tuning in stations from as far away as Chicago, Baltimore, Detroit, Nashville, Canada and even Mexico. Around this time, my local AM station, WFEA, had a underground 60s pop and rock format and I listened every night my favorite DJ was on – Johnny Tripp. I was determined to hang out at WFEA if I could. I rode the five miles across the river on my bike, and found that Johnny Tripp actually answered the door and talked to me!

His work with radios in a musical setting was a way for him to bring in energies from outside the band into their work. In his own words, "I looked for the devices to bring a different world into the group again and they had to react on that. That was the idea, working with a radio or working with tapes or working with a telephone. I even had this idea that with a transmitter, we could transmit and receive things back again. Or to call up people like today's radio shows where people call up or you call people. This sort of interaction I wanted to establish. But the group was not interested in this. So I finished with Can and went my own way. And here, I really followed this. I was working on that for a few years (with Can) but then I found it that it wasn't fun anymore. I continued alone then worked with other people."

Can had a great run as a band from 1968 to 1979. Afterwards Czukay continued to flourish with his solo recordings, including albums like *Radio Wave Surfer*. The methods he developed for using radio as an instrument he termed radio painting. He continued to make solo albums and collaborate with other musicians on various projects throughout the 80's, 90's and 2000's. He died of unknown causes on September 5, 2017.

All of this tells you the who, what, where, when and why. But to get the full experience I invite you to blow your mind by listening to Stockhausen, Can, Holger Czukay, and other crispy Krautrock bands! There is no better place to start than with Hymnen, the Can discography.

Sources:

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searching for the best signal, the radio does it for you. It has many frequencies and countries already programmed into it. Surprisingly, the USA pages have ALL the frequencies for WWCR, as well as WRNO and several for VOA, which saved me a lot of work. Same with BBC. It's in there when you get the radio, though they call the page "London". I have done extensive reprogramming though, re-arranging pages, and deleting stations I don't listen to.

Radio Australia, as well as DW are also in there, and many more. Right out of the box, you can use the memory function, but there are a lot of free memory channels. I made a memory page called SSB stuff because this is the first small portable I have ever had that has SSB. The SSB quality is actually a little better than the 2010 because the frequency steps are smaller (40kHz instead of 100). Mind you, I am used to 10 cycle accuracy, which I have on the Kenwood, but the SSB is a lot more pleasing than on the 2010.

It has local and world time, and you can set the city of the world to any of 29 (London is used for GMT). And there is a button for Daylight savings time so in the fall you just push that one button and don't have to reset the clock like you do with every other electronic gizmo you have. In fact the radio just MIGHT automatically set the time for you with (TAADAA!) RDS

The carrying case is black soft leatherette, and is very nice. It does not have a carry strap, but you could easily have a leather shop add one for you. The case protects the radio from getting banged up taking it around. And take it around I did. It arrived this morning, and I stuck the radio and the manual into the carry case (both fit, which is handy) and took it to the laundromat and all over town while Elaine and I were doing errands. In my spare time, I programmed in station names and frequencies and just tuned around.

The radio is larger and heavier than the 808, but smaller and lighter than the 2010. It weighs 30 ounces, and is 8 1/4 x 5.0 x 1 1/2. FM Reception is in stereo just like most modern multi-band portables, and it sounds great. Being larger than the 808, it has a better sound quality, superior to the larger Sony 2010. It lacks AM SYNC DETECTION, which is its only failing, but you can live without it because of all the other way cool features. It has a feature called APS (Automatic Programming System, which will scan your local AM and FM bands and put all the stations it finds in memory. If you take the radio to another city, this could be a handy feature. You can lock stations into memory so the APS will not erase them.

There are three separate timers plus a sleep timer. It does not have the program timers like the 2010, but I never used those much. It does have a recorder start stop, and record out. While you can't set a stop time (Each timer is a one hour shot), you can set start times, on three different frequencies, so you do have some programming capabilities, though it must be a daily schedule.

There is an RF gain control, a handy feature in some instances. The tone control is just like the 2010, three positions: MUSIC/NEWS/FULL RANGE. Full Range has the best sound to my ears. It has a very deep bass and sparkling highs, amazing for such a small box. The radio does not have an excessively powerful audio amplifier, but it is more than adequate. FM reception is in stereo by headphones.

You want this radio. I got mine from AMERICAN FREEDOM NETWORK. It costs \$299, plus \$10 shipping, but they give you a free power supply. (Usually optional) You also get a really cute reel out antenna, which is much nicer than the antenna that comes with the 2010. If you are out in the woods, just zip it out and hook to a tree branch and you are all set to DX.

Stockhausen influenced Czukay in other ways. It hadn't originally been Czukay's intention to become a rock musician. He was more interested in classical music, which he thought was the best, with a definite leaning towards it's avant-garde. "Therefore I went to Stockhausen as he was the most interesting person. Very radical in his thoughts. With the invention of electronic music he could replace all other musicians suddenly: that was not only an experiment; that was a revolution! I thought that is the right man, yeah? So I studied with him for about three years. Until I finally said, if a bird is ready to fly, he leaves his nest and that is what I have done." After leaving the nest Holger became a music teacher in his own right as a way to make a living. Later he was able to work full time as a musician, because as he often joked, he was married to a rich woman. Teachers always learn from their students though and his were teaching him about the rock and pop music of the time, playing him records of Jimi Hendrix and the Rolling Stones. The Velvet Underground and Pink Floyd's stood out to him, as did the song I am the Walrus by the Beatles. Czukay fell in love with that masterpiece of psychedelic pop. In particular he loved the way bursts of AM static and the sound of tuning between stations had been used for a musical effect at the end of the cut.

All of these influences and elements would fused together in his work with Can, a project begun while he was still a teacher. Irmin Schmidt's mark on the band was equally massive, and he was just steeped, if not more, in the 20th century avant-garde, but exploring his contribution is not in the scope of this article. For most of his time in the band, Czukay played bass, but toward the end he gave up that instrument altogether in favor of a shortwave radio. He speaks about Stockhausen's influence in making this switch.

"A shortwave radio is just basically an unpredictable synthesizer. You don't know what it's going to bring from one moment to the next. It surprises you all the time and you have to react spontaneously. The idea came from Stockhausen again. He made a piece called 'Short Wave' ['Kurzwellen']. And I could hear that the musicians were searching for music, for stations or whatever, and he was sitting in the middle of it all and the sounds came into his hands and he made music out of it. He was mixing it live – and composing it live. He had a kind of plan, but didn't know what the plan would bring him. With Can, I would mix stuff in with what the rest of the band were playing. Also, we were searching for a singer and we didn't find one – we tested many, but couldn't find anyone – so I thought: 'why not look to the radio for someone instead? The man inside the radio does not hear us, but we hear him.'" This he used without additional effects. "The radio has a VFO – an oscillator – where you can receive single side-bands, which means just half of the waves and you can decode it – it's like a ring modulator. And that's more than enough. The other members of Can were very open to these unpredictable uses of instruments, especially in the early days."

University of California, where he had lectured on experimental music. Among those at his seminar's were the Grateful Dead's Jerry Garcia and Phil Lesh, Grace Slick of Jefferson Airplane and many other psychedelic musicians. Far from snubbing the new music Stockhausen was seen at a Jefferson Airplane show at the Fillmore West and was quoted as saying that the music '...really blows my mind.' So whilst the young German artists loved Stockhausen for embracing their own rock'n'roll culture, they doubly loved him for what they recognized as the beginning of a freeing of all German symbols. By reducing 'Deutschland, Deutschland Uber Alles' to its minimum possible length he had codified it...Stockhausen had unconsciously diffused a symbol of oppression, and so enabled the people to have it back."

Czukay's time studying with Stockhausen was as important to the development of Krautrock as was Hymnen itself. In fact while Stockhausen was working on Hymnen at the WDR studio during the day, Holger Czukay and the other members of a pre-Can group, the Technical Space Composers Crew, would go in and use the equipment at night to record their own album Canaxis. In the piece 'Boat Woman's Song' some of Czukay's early pioneering use of sampling can be heard. The proto-ambient pieces of music on this record were painstakingly assembled from tape loops and segments of a traditional Vietnamese folk song. In an interview Czukay spoke of the experience. "When Stockhausen left for home, we had a second key and went in and switched everything on. We went in and Canaxis was produced in one night. In one night the main song 'Boat Woman Song' was done. I prepared myself at night at home, so I knew exactly what I wanted to do, so in four hours the whole thing was done." David Johnson helped Czukay and Rolf Dammers engineer the album. "He knew the studio a bit better than me. He was engineering a bit, switching on stuff, copying from one machine to another...and that was okay. In four hours the job was done." The music on Canaxis is eerie and beautiful and haunting. It is both a part of this world, but also not of it. It seems as if it has come to us from beyond, and some fifty years later it still sounds fresh, as all timeless music does.



A brief remembrance of Gary Bourgois

Gary Bourgois was the President and Program Director of Sky-Bird Radio, and humble host of "Friday Night Live" the longest running technical talk show, having its roots in satellite radio since the early days of satellite broadcasting. Many longtime C Band Dish owners may remember Gary's quick wit and extensive knowledge of the satellite industry. Gary's FNL "News and Views" was considered the best satellite news coverage anywhere. Gary hosted FNL since about 1991, starting back with Jim Bass on the old LTR Network, a service devoted to ham radio operators and Shortwave Radio Listeners (SWL's). Before FNL, Gary was:

- Novell System Administrator at a hospital in Marquette, Michigan;
- A wild and wooly DJ who scared the pants off the managers of several Marquette radio stations;
- TV producer at WLUC-TV, Channel 6 in Marquette;
- Radio and TV broadcaster for many years at Northern Michigan University's WNMU-FM and WNMU-TV stations where he also lectured on Multitrack Production for university broadcasting classes.

Following this, he managed STUDIO B, the only recording studio in downtown Marquette (on the prestigious 100 Block, where all the banks are). The studio, located over a shoe store, is where the “Flash Frizbone Comedy Series” was produced for the Aircheck Factory.

Gary's interests included Elaine (the love of his life), his cat BINKY (a.k.a. Velcra), and all forms of communications. He got his ham ticket (WB8EOH) in 1967, was active in SWL and Broadcast Band listening (BCB DXer), and occasionally fired up his 2kw ham station to talk with fellow hams all over the world. Gary monitored 146.94 simplex 24 hours a day (his private channel) and, if you were ever in downtown Marquette and had a ham ticket, you could give him a call and see his rig.

In 1976 while at WNMU, he witnessed the installation of the first satellite dish in Northern Michigan (a 30 footer!). He later helped install the first home dish in Upper Michigan, a 12 footer with a SKY EYE 1 receiver. At the university, playing with the satellite receivers during his off time became a bit of an obsession. Eventually he knew he had to have a dish of his own, but the \$5,000 price for a home dish was out of the question. Prices kept going down, and his recording studio picked up the account of RENT-A-DISH in Negaunee, Michigan, which at one time was the largest satellite dealer in the USA. But the money was needed for other things ... until 1986 when he acquired his first satellite receiver, a used 70mhz analog tuner he traded for a microphone.

Always eager to explore new technologies, and with a zest for life, Gary kept busy exploring the universe, having fun, and kicking back with Elaine and the family to enjoy the pleasures of being alive. On Tuesday 15 November 2005, Gary – the “Eccentric Old Hippy” – went silent key. Gary got many people started as dishheads and talk radio hosts. He has now moved on to join Elaine on his favorite airshift – eternity – where nothing is scrambled, and the signals never fade.

He spoke about this time, and his fascination with the mystery of electricity, in an interview. “When I was fourteen or fifteen years old, I didn't know if I wanted to become a technician or a musician. And when you are so young you think the one has to exclude the other. So in the very beginning I thought I am sort of a musical wonder-child, and want to become a conductor and that was very very serious, but there was no chance to get educated as I was a refugee after the war. And then, suddenly, electricity. Electricity was such a fascinating thing - it was something. And then I became the boy in a shop who carries the radios to repair them and carries them back again. That was so-called three-dimensional radio, before stereo. There was one front speaker in the radio and at the side, there were two treble speakers which gave an image of spatial depth. I must say these radios sounded fantastic.”

In 1963 at the age of twenty-five he Czukay decided to pursue the musical side of his vocation and begin studying under Karlheinz Stockhausen at the Cologne Courses for New Music. This is where he met up with Irmin Schmidt, another founding member of Can, who was also a student of Stockhausen's. As much as Can itself was one of the guiding forces of Krautrock, or Kosmiche music as it was also called, a broad style of experimental rock music developed in Germany in the late 60s. Krautrock was for the most part divorced from the traditional blues and rock and roll influences of British and American rock music scenes of the time. Krautrock featured more electronic elements and contributed to the further development electronic music and ambient music as well as the birth of post-punk, alternative rock and New Age music. Stockhausen himself could be thought of as one of its chief instigators, a kind of Godfather of the genre. This was due not only to his influence as a teacher of German musicians, but because of his pioneering work with the raw elements of electronic music itself at the WDR studios.

Eccentric British rock musician and author Julian Cope discusses the importance of Stockhausen's composition Hymnen in his book Krautrock Sampler. He considered that piece in particular pivotal to the whole Krautrock movement. It's release had “repercussions all over W. Germany, and not least in the heads of young artists. It was a huge 113 minute piece, subtitled ‘anthems for electronic and concrete sounds’. Hymnen was divided up into four LP sides, titled Region I, Region II, Region III and Region IV.” In a previous column I had discussed this piece of music as an early attempt at creating ‘world music’. With its sounds of shortwave receivers and electronics it plays anthems from various countries in an attempt to unify them. What he did with the German anthem, ‘Deutschland, Deutschland Uber Alles’ had a liberating effect on young Germany, who had grown up under the shadow of the worst kind of nationalism. Cope writes of the German public's reaction, “The left-wing didn't see the funny side at all and accused him of appealing to the basest German feelings, whilst the right-wing hated him for vilifying their pride and joy, and letting the Europeans laugh at them. Stockhausen had just returned from six months at the



The Radiophonic Laboratory: Holger Czukay, Radio Wave Surfer by Justin Patrick Moore, KE8COY

Holger Czukay was another musician who was fascinated with the sounds of shortwave listening. He brought his love of radio and communications technology on board with him when he helped to found the influential krautrock band Can in 1968. Shortwave listening continued to inform Czukay's musical practice in his solo and other collaborative works later in his career. It all got started when he worked at a radio shop as a teenager. Holger had been born in the Free City of Danzig in 1938, the year before the outbreak of World War II. In the aftermath of the war his family was expelled from the city when the Allies dissolved its status as free city-state and made it become a part of Poland. Growing up in those bleak times his formal primary education was limited, but he made up for it when he found work at a radio repair shop. He had already developed an interest in music and one his ideas was to become a conductor, but fate had other plans for him. Working with the radios day in and day out he developed a fondness for broadcast radio. In particular he found unique aural qualities in the static and grainy washes of the radio waves coming in across the shortwave bands. At the shop he also became familiar with basic electrical repair work and rudimentary engineering. All of this would serve him well when building the studio for Can. In his work with the band he not only played bass and other instruments but acted as the chief audio engineer.



Free Radio Skybird has been including edited versions of the joyous celebration of radio that is known as **Radio Emma Toc** once a month in our broadcasts. Jim Salmon is the creator & host of Radio Emma Toc.

Please tell me the origins of Radio Emma Toc and how you launched into this project?

Jim: I've been interested in radio since around 1970, when as a 13yr old I tuned in to a brightly coloured radio ship off the Essex coast - Radio Northsea International. This was one of the UK's second wave of 'pirate' stations (not technically 'pirate' as it was outside UK jurisdiction), & the broadcasts were exciting, different, anarchic, irreverent, - & fun! I progressed on to the returning Radio Caroline in 1972, & was then hooked...

Radio was always a hobby, & I dabbled in shortwave free radio broadcasting in the 1990's with a monthly media magazine broadcast by friends at BIRS - The Belgian International Relay Service (! - well - maybe it wasn't all it seemed!). In 2001 I got slightly more involved with radio with setting up a small community station 'Chelmsford Calling'. The fun of this turned into not so much fun, the station closed, & for a while radio took a back seat, although more shortwave dabbling in 2015 with 'Chelmsford Calling World Service' (my delusions of grandeur?!) revived the fun.

In 2006 I had gone with Ann to a talk at the Chelmsford Amateur Radio Society (CARS) by Carl Thompson, the Radio Caroline chief engineer from the 1960's, & Ann made the - possibly fatal - suggestion that I become a 'radio ham'! I obviously took her advice, & soon progressed to my current callsign 2EORMI. I joined CARS & on various occasions we transmitted from a strange old wooden Hut in our local Industrial Museum. I then started to learn the history of this intriguing Hut, & that it had been the home of '2MT' - Britain's first licenced regular entertainment broadcast station in 1922. I learnt more after reading '2MT Writtle - The Birth Of British Broadcasting' by Tim Wander, & became fascinated by the story of 2MT & moreso the people involved in this fledgling wireless station, & their appealing irreverence & somewhat similar anarchic & independent spirit.

2001 and was a dream come true. From there I went on to be a co-host and then host of On the Way to the Peak of Normal. I tried to quit radio in 2014 but found it was a habit that had stuck and ended up getting my ham license the next year, and I'm still active on the air as a ham. Then I started going back to WAIF now and again to fill in for my friend Ken Katkin on his WAIF show Trash Flow Radio. Once you get the radio bug, you really can't give it up.

Through an article I wrote on Holger Czukay's use of shortwave radio in music in his band Can I met Madtone aka Pete Polanyk and he introduced me to Free Radio Skybird and to you, and the journey continues.

Tell me more about your experiences with AntiWatt - was it an FM station, what frequency, were there many listeners, what was the on-air culture like & what made it a 'pirate' station?

Justin: Anti-Watt was low-power FM unlicensed pirate station started by the students of Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio in the late '90s. The range of the broadcast only really got to the outskirts of the village of Yellow Springs. The students started this station because, even though there was a community owned station in Yellow Springs, WYSO, affiliated with the college and NPR, it was extremely rare for any student to actually be able to access the station and do any kind of college radio programming at WYSO. That was a real shame because WYSO was started by the students at the college as 10-Watt station in the late 50s.

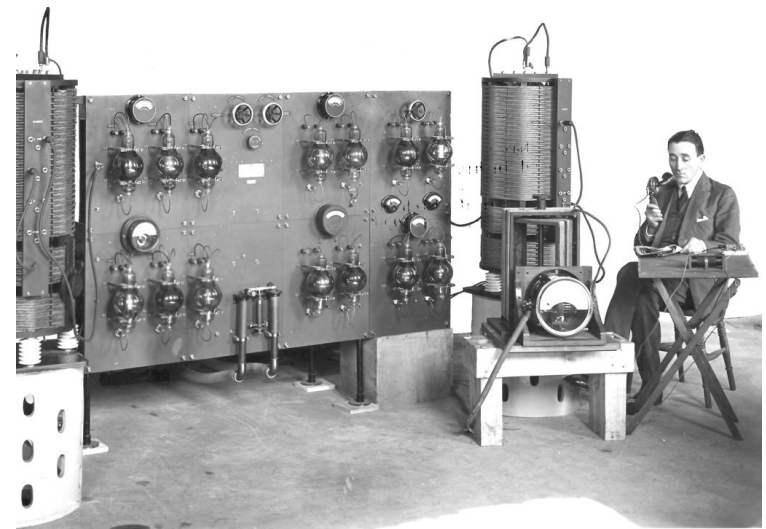
In response to the lack of availability to be on their own station a group of students formed Anti-Watt. The transmitter was built and a basic station was set up in an empty room. Volunteers filled the time slots. It was the nature of the time and place that a lot of beer got spilled into the mixing board, so things didn't always work the best. But they worked, and gave students the control and ability to do all the programming themselves. Eventually Anti-Watt went off the air, a couple of years after I dropped out. I heard a rumor that a student knocked on the door to the room that held the station and said, "FCC, open up!" or some such and the people in the studio scrambled and through the transmitter out of the window, but I wouldn't be surprised if that is just college lore. The station probably really went down because of the beer in the mixer. It was a fun time and my first taste of being on the air in those years of 1998-2000. I still can hear WYSO seventy miles away here in Cincinnati on occasion, when up on the hills, or when there is some good E-skip happening. I would have preferred if it was still Anti-Watt, raised in power and blasting away.



The experimental music scene in Cincinnati was galvanized around Art Damage and gradually I found my way into those circles. Listening to Uncle Dave Lewis, one of the original founders of the show, late at night as he essentially gave experimental music history lessons on people like Raymond Scott or Charles Ives, along with playing stuff so underground I've never heard it again anywhere else, was formative.

The third influence was the public library. On my way home from school I had to transfer to another bus downtown and I would often stop and visit the Main Library to get books and CD's. Just browsing the CD collection I would take out stuff by people's whose names I'd kind of heard, but didn't really know anything about at the time, like Brian Eno. One of the CDs I got from there was a compilation on Nonesuch records called **Imaginary Landscapes: New Electronic Music**. It had people on their like Maryanne Amacher, Alvin Lucier, and David Tudor. So began my habit of crate digging. The library has remained one of my main sources of music, especially since I got a job at the Main Library when I was 21 and have been an employee there these past twenty years. Cincinnati's collection is very deep, especially their classical section and I used that resource to explore the world of early electronic music. One should never underestimate the access to free knowledge and culture. PBS, community radio, and the public library have all enriched my life immeasurably for the better.

Later after I got started on a pirate radio station, Anti-Watt at Antioch college. I started a freeform audio collage show with live music called the Psychedelicatessins and worked in the school library. All of that was way more important than any classes I happened to take while there. But because I wasn't doing good in the academic part of things, I dropped out after a year and half and got a job at the library back home in Cincinnati. It wasn't long before I met some of the Art Damage crew both at work and at shows and was asked to be part of the rotating shift of hosts. This was in



An idea came to mind... How about taking inspiration from 2MT & rekindling some of the fun they had all those years ago? In 2017, on their 95th birthday, I set up an online, three day station called 'Radio Emma Toc'. Strange name? Well, best if you pop over to my website home page for an explanation! www.emmatoc.com

We had fun!! Tim Wander (the font of wisdom on 2MT!) was fully involved, & we hopefully captured some of the original spirit of 2MT.

So, looking ahead to the 100th birthday I hope to do something similar. In the meantime, drawing on the fun of shortwave & the camaraderie amongst enthusiast broadcasters & listeners, I can see a link between today's shortwave world & the early pioneering days of radio from the wooden Hut. I also believe these are interesting times for shortwave with a tried & tested method of traditional communication being linked to current digital systems to give a very useful method of reaching people & providing information. So - why not put it all together & mostly try & have some fun with - 'The Radio Emma Toc World Service'! Maybe in 2022 we might all be able to join together to celebrate 2MT online & on shortwave, & raise awareness of this still very relevant form of communication.

Of course for me this is a hobby so the current programme may last for a few shows or maybe a few years! I do somehow think however that in February 2022 there will be celebration somewhere of shortwave radio, 2MT, & inspiring pioneers. As long as it's still fun, we'll do it!

Do you have any favorite radio stations or shows that you listen to that readers should know about?

Jim: Surprisingly this is a difficult question to answer. I tend to flit around a lot & like discovering new things, so I find it difficult to stick with the same show or station for too long. That said, I still find myself returning to Radio Caroline which is now online & on 648kHz locally across the east of the UK, & still producing good album music programmes in keeping with their original philosophy.

We're lucky in the UK to have the BBC, & whilst I've tried to avoid some of the constant doom & gloom news recently, I've found the BBC World Service particularly good in giving a wider world view. I've also found myself listening to more shortwave programmes over the past few months, many on the German relay station Channel 292 on 6070kHz.

I like my music, although mostly listen on Spotify rather than the radio. One exception is 'Group Therapy - with Above & Beyond' on a Friday evening. Streamed on YouTube & various dance music stations, I try & listen when I can. Possibly a strange choice but I find electronic music has many roots in 80's culture & 70's album music, & I like to hear something & think - where on earth did that come from? - or - I've got to hear that again...!

Above all I keep an open mind to stations, programmes & music, & try & listen long enough to determine if it's interesting. Some of the best shows or stations were not necessarily the most appealing on first listen!



Justin Moore produces the **Radiophonic Laboratory** for FRS, cooked up deep within Justin's mysterious studios. Justin's shows are like electromagnetic orbs that spin through the ionosphere creating delight for the ear of the beholder.

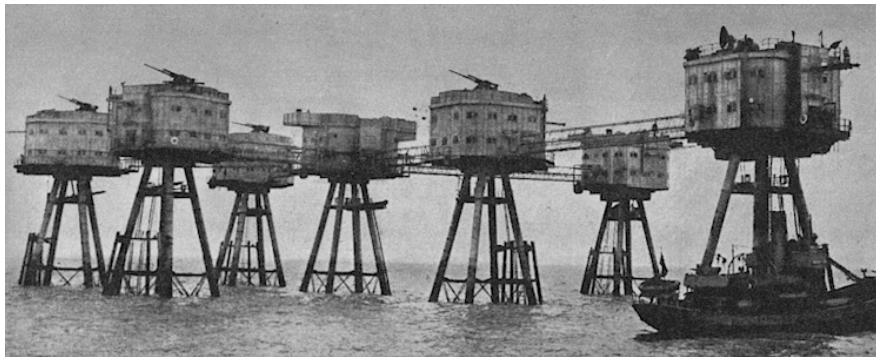
How did you first become involved in your interests of radio & early electronic music?

There were three main influences that got me hooked on radiophonics starting at an early age. The first was when I discovered Doctor Who around age 10 on the local PBS station, WCET. I always loved the PBS station as a kid, and if ever stayed home from school I would plunk down and try to catch weird shows like the CBC's Read All About It. One Saturday evening we were visiting my great grandparents and all the adults were talking late into the night. I flipped through their den and got sucked into the time and space vortex of my first Doctor Who episode. It was a Peter Davison story, and back in those days, instead of playing the show as a serial, they had edited all the parts together into a seamless whole. The episode was Four to Doomsday. After that night, every Saturday I could I tried to watch the show. Soon the station started playing all the William Hartnell episodes. I credit watching that show, especially the early episodes, and listening to the theme song as realized by Delia Derbyshire along with all the incidental music by the rest of the Radiophonic Workshop as part of what molded my tastes in music and sound. The second influence was listening to WAIF 88.3 FM, Cincinnati's community radio station. I started listening to it regularly the summer before the sixth grade. Somebody came on and played a cut from Ice-T's controversial heavy metal band Body Count, and I was shocked that something like that could be played on the radio. But it also grabbed my attention, because even back then I liked the heavier music my oldest sister listened to, and I kept on tuning in to WAIF to hear the kind of stuff that wasn't being played anywhere else on the dial. In high school I started listening to WAIF shows like Alien Transmissions, Alien Soundtracks, and most importantly, staying up past midnight to hear the legendary Art Damage. A friend of mine had made me a cassette of Art Damage. None of the tracks were listed, as all the voice overs had been edited off the tape to maximize the music. So for almost two decades, there was music by artists who I didn't know the name of on that very influential tape. Later as I kept exploring music I'd hear things and recognize that it was Sun Ra and Nurse With Wound.

I knew about the Maunsell sea forts through the offshore pirates but it's only in the past couple of decades they've really taken a hold on me. It's the look of them, they're got a very War of the Worlds-like, out there, from another planet type feel about them! Through the internet I've learnt loads about them, their history, who were stationed there and I love everything about them! I've only seen Shivering Sands and Red Sands forts from Whitstable beach and never actually visited them, but they look stunning and if there's a storm brewing out at sea even better! Sealand is another place I'd love to visit but that's very doubtful, I wouldn't even mind owning a set of stamps from there!

I love hearing about the myths and the stories about the sea forts like when the artist Stephen Turner who was alone on the searchlight tower on Shivering Sands for 36 days (the amount of time the soldiers would have spent there in service) in 2005. He awoke one morning convinced he "heard a voice shout "Arthur" – like a mother trying to wake a child." Very strange stuff, seeing as no women were ever stationed on the fort during wartime plus learning that the foundations of the fort are supposedly brick and rubble from Blitz demolished houses. I once met an archaeologist on a dig in London on a wartime gun emplacement who told me he travelled out to Shivering Sands to do an inventory for the Ministry of Defence and said when you see them up close they are a lot bigger than you imagine and because of them being deserted it feels very spooky out there.

Also once we had some new doors put on the back of our house and I was chatting to the chap fitting them, who told us his aunt ran the Kent clipper service and was the proud owner of the first commercial Calor Gas heater which she took off one of the forts belonging to a pirate station. I don't know if that's true but it certainly adds to the myth and legend of the forts.



Free Radio Skybird as currently configured could not exist without Pete Polanyk aka "One Deck Pete" and "Madtone". Pete, along with Justin Moore, are the most intuitive & creative collaborators I could wish for. In addition to making colorful and inventive graphics for the FRS broadcasts, Pete contributes our interval signal, musical segments and is the friendly voice of the Skybird mailbag program.

What intrigues you about the medium of radio?

Pete: I can't actually put my finger on why radio intrigues me but it always has done. Listening to it was always a big thing when I was kid (even before I was an avid shortwave listener in my early teens) tuning into the likes of the offshore pirates and Radio Luxembourg on a transistor radio. The reception of these stations were never really that brilliant in the mid-lands (of the UK where I lived when I was younger) so that's where I think I get the love of fading and distortion of radio signals from. I also loved the idea of these almost mystical figures (the DJ's) playing pop music on rusty old boats and wartime sea forts far out at sea. They also played tunes that you'd never hear on stations in the UK either, especially the tracks they'd play on Radio Caroline, Radio Veronica or Radio North Sea International.

When I stopped being a shortwave listener in my mid-teens due to the punk explosion, I'd never imagined I'd get into it again. I can thank listening later on in life to the likes of Holger Czukay and Jah Wobble who weaved samples off the radio into their tunes that reeled me back in. I then started looking online at the likes of Simon Mason's website where I learnt about the numbers stations I used to hear in my younger days and wondered at the time why a woman was repeating numbers in German on the radio, reading about the station sometimes known as UVB-76 on the web and thinking why did it transmit this constant buzzing. All of this led me to my wife buying me a Sony ICF-SW7600GR for my birthday. Shortwave had found me again!

Even when I did get into Punk, radio still featured heavily but just not shortwave. I listened to the John Peel show on the BBC religiously and taped all of the week's episodes and at the weekend made compilations of all the best tunes (you can tell that was before I had kids and had something called spare time!) When I think of all the bands, gigs, records and fanzines I heard about and the people I've met indirectly through his show I now realise it was a lot more than just a chap talking and playing records over the airwaves. I still follow music programs on the radio like "On The Wire" (BBC Radio Lancashire), The Echo Chamber (KFAI), The Garden of Earthly Delights (CRMK,) The Rhythm Doctor on Estonian National Raadio 2 and This is a music show on WRMI. With these shows you never know what you're going to expect to hear and there's a real good possibility they'll play something that'll knock you for six in a good way. That's the power of radio, especially when it comes to music shows. They're there to communicate, to inform, to educate, the DJ passing on

their musical knowledge and share their joy so to speak. As a listener it's the joy of discovering things you've never heard of before. Radio helps spread that musical word!

When I listen to the shortwave it sparks off something in my imagination, whether it's listening to a Norwegian radio amateur travelling from the Caribbean to the Azores on a boat in the Atlantic Ocean or a DX QSO on 40 metres between an American and Serbian ham over a distance of 5,000 miles where there's confusion between the two of them over each others call signs as the reception is not too good. Those QSO's to me are stories in themselves and I also think about how many other people around the world are tuning in at the same time to them. I love the way shortwave transmissions are NOT Hi-Fi quality and sometimes actually sound like they've been on a journey bouncing around the earth via the ionosphere.

The very thought of a radio wave coming out of a transmitter into an antenna and being received in another continent or at the other side of the world is still something that amazes me even in today's world of internet and mobile phone communication.

Tell me about your interest in Pirate & Offshore Radio and the Maunsell Forts?

Pete: It all goes back to when I was a kid hearing Radio Veronica on the old wireless at home playing Prisencolinensinaincilis by Adriano Celentano. Here's the tune:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ulDQdikjSSE>

The sound quality wasn't great as Veronica was competing with another station, but I could make out the tune with its nonsensical lyrics, that horn riff and the banging of the kick drum. That's one of my first memories of the offshore pirates and that tune brings me back there. I also used to listen to Radio North Sea International and Caroline on that valve wireless too.

What was good with the offshore stations was that they wouldn't play the usual stuff you'd hear on normal UK radio, you'd discover all sorts of euro rock tunes and eclectic stuff. Were the offshore UK pirates the pioneers of the specialist radio shows/radio stations? Possibly.

A few years after punk I tried to get a FM pirate together in Coventry with some mates but it sadly didn't come to fruition. When I moved to London in the late 1980's I met with one of the crew of the pirate TV/Radio station Network 21 after sending them a letter saying I wanted to get involved but didn't get anywhere further than a meeting. It's not surprising as then I wasn't creating graphics, producing music or had any electronic building skills to offer them. I just wanted to become involved with pirate radio as I'd always loved the freedom of the stations, the music and obviously the underground/ clandestine nature of it all helped too.



I really think that pirate radio did/does break down barriers, I mean look at the London FM dance, rave and reggae stations. This is only a personal opinion, but I don't get why some shortwave pirates don't stick their neck out and experiment, instead play it safe with 1970/80's mainstream rock oldies. There's nothing wrong with that, but don't the legal oldies stations cater for that market? I find the best radio stations are the ones that go about trying to expand the listener's mind and make him/her feel involved.

I don't know too much about the US Pirates apart from that I used to follow Ragnar Daneskjold's Pirates Week (I used to love that podcast and it's a shame it's not around anymore) but what I heard was great. The format of the US pirates are so different to the UK stations and I love their inventiveness, humour and how they stretch the medium of radio rather than just playing tunes.

I sent Ragnar some of my early Madtone tracks which he played on the show which led to them being played on The Lumpy Gravy Radio Show and The Voice of Codeine which was great. I loved the idea of my tunes (which contain samples from the shortwave radio usually containing effects caused by the ionosphere) being bounced back up into the atmosphere again. That's what I like about my mixes being played out on Free Radio Skybird is that I can record them off an SDR (or hopefully when conditions get better my Yaesu FRG 7700) and put them on my soundcloud as I love how shortwave adds its own bit of quality and depth to the mix!